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HOW TO...

Create a sunset with Serif DrawPlus 6

Fancy creating impressive artwork on your PC? Adam Banks and the free software on this month's cover disc can help

SERIF DRAWPLUS 6

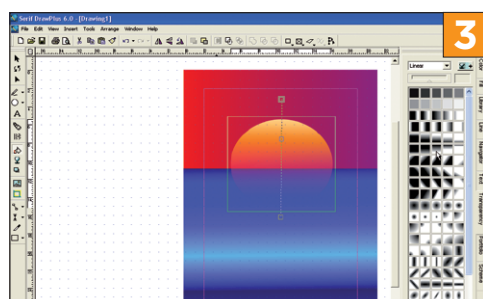
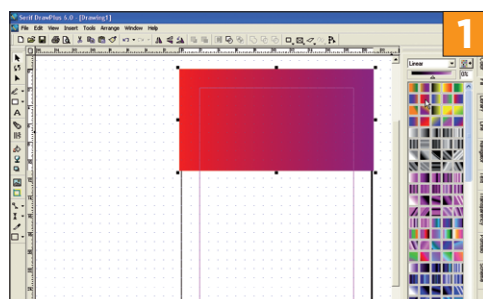


Serif DrawPlus 6 is a very capable general-purpose drawing program. Unlike image editors, drawing programs work with vector shapes, which you can overlap, move around and resize with no loss of quality. It's a powerful way to create graphics, especially for such things as logos and diagrams, but it can be complicated. Fortunately, DrawPlus offers plenty of easy ways to turn simple drawings into impressive artwork. Here's how to draw a sunset with just a few clicks.

- 1 Install Serif DrawPlus 6 and run the program. Click the option to Create a Drawing. In the next dialog box, set the page size to A4 Tall. Click Finish to create a new blank page.

In the main toolbox on the left, click the rectangle icon to activate the QuickBox tool. Click in the top-left corner of your blank page and drag to draw a rectangle that covers around the top third. At the far right, click the Fill tab to see DrawPlus's ready-made gradient fills. Pick one that reminds you of a sky at sunset.

- 2 Draw another rectangle in the same way, overlapping the first one and continuing to the bottom. Pick a stripey blue fill for the sea. With this rectangle selected, you can adjust the fill by clicking the paint bucket icon in the toolbox to activate the Fill tool, then dragging the 'handles' that appear. Remember that any tools, colours or effects you choose in a drawing program will apply to the currently selected objects.



You can use the Pointer tool – the first icon in the toolbox – to select any object by clicking it, and hold Shift to select several objects at once.

- 3 Click the triangle to the right of the QuickBox icon to reveal the other QuickShapes, and pick QuickEllipse. Use this to draw a slightly flattened circle for the sun, overlapping the horizon. Give it a suitable fill and adjust it with the Fill tool; remember that you can use this to change the angle of the fill between horizontal, vertical and diagonal simply by dragging the top or bottom handle, so if there's a preset that has the right colours but the wrong angle, select it and adjust the result.

To make the sun (or its reflection) fade off into the sea, click the Transparency tab on the right. These gradients alter the opacity of the selected object. Pick one that goes from black (visible) at the top to white (invisible) at the bottom.

- 4 For a final touch, choose the Roughen tool from the toolbox (the eighth icon down). Click on the sun, then drag slowly up or down to crinkle the edges, giving it a hot, hazy look.

You could finish off your artwork by adding some text using the Text tool, the 'A' icon in the toolbox. We've given our text a soft shadow using the Filter Effects command on the Tools menu. These and all the other great features of DrawPlus are explained in the onscreen Help. ☺

